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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 271

24 March 1950

SUBJECT: Initial Alignments in the Event of War Before 1954.

1. The problem presented assumes the outbreak of a general war before 1954 and requires an estimate of initial alignments in that event, without reference to subsequent developments.

PROBABLE ENEMIES

2. The USSR.

A general war before 1954 is conceivable only as the result of Soviet military aggression.

3. The Soviet Satellite States.

In such a war the USSR, as a matter of course, would be supported by the Soviet satellite states: Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Outer Mongolia, and North Korea.

4. Communist China.

Although Communist China has at present a greater capability for independent action than the satellite states listed above, it is firmly allied with the USSR and would support the USSR in the event of war. Long before 1954 the Communist regime will probably have gained control of all Chinese territory now beyond its control: Tibet, Hainan, and Taiwan.

5. Communist Vietnam.

The Vietnamese insurgents are predominantly nationalists rather than Communists, but Communist leadership of the movement is firmly established. Apart from this consideration, the insurgents' alignment with the USSR in the event of war would be an automatic consequence of their actual hostilities with France. These insurgents have long controlled most of the interior of Vietnam. Before 1954 they will probably have gained control of most, if not all, of Indochina.

Note: This memorandum has not been coordinated with the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Navy, and the Air Force.

NO CHANGE in Class. ☐~~DECLASSIFIED~~

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ALLIED AND ASSOCIATED POWERS

6. The North Atlantic Treaty.

The nations allied by the North Atlantic Treaty -- the United States, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Italy, and Portugal -- would honor their commitments in the event of war.

Except for Indochina (see section 5 above), the overseas territories of the North Atlantic Treaty powers are reasonably secure, although Communist guerrilla activity continues in Malaya and there is some unrest in French North Africa, British West Africa, Cyprus, Madagascar, and Hong Kong. Unrest may develop in Italian Somaliland when the Italians return to that area.

7. Other Recipients of US Military Aid.

As recipients of US military aid, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Korea, and the Philippines look to the United States for support and protection against Soviet military aggression. None, however, would be willing to take action in behalf of the United States deemed likely to provoke an otherwise avoidable Soviet attack upon itself. Thus, if the USSR chose to direct its offensive effort elsewhere, each would be disposed to remain non-belligerent. In all probability, however, each (except possibly the Philippines) would be attacked immediately on the outbreak of war, in which case each would defend itself as best it could while calling for US aid.

8. Other Members of the British Commonwealth.

Although the other commonwealth governments are not committed by the adherence of the United Kingdom and Canada to the North Atlantic Treaty, it is probable that South Africa, Ceylon, Australia, and New Zealand would render prompt belligerent support in the event of Soviet aggression. (India and Pakistan, however, would probably remain initially neutral.)

9. British Arab Allies.

The British treaties of alliance with Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq would be operative in the assumed circumstances. Egypt and Iraq have shown in the past a disposition to repudiate this alliance, but in any case the British would utilize their bases and forces actually in those countries as the occasion required, and it is probable that the Egyptian and Iraqi governments would render at least passive support. There is no question about

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Jordan, which is dependent on the British for its existence.

It is probable that a similar treaty relationship will be established between Great Britain and Libya coincident with the independence of that country.

10. Liberia, Ethiopia, and Saudi Arabia.

Existing arrangements with Liberia would assure US use of air base and port facilities in that country. Similar Ethiopian cooperation would probably be available, although the situation is less definite. Ibn Saud would expect the United States to defend Dhahran and would do what he could to cooperate.

11. The Other American Republics.

The other American republics would be aligned with the United States in various degrees of effective cooperation.

12. The Occupied Areas.

Continued Western military occupation of western Germany, western Austria, Trieste, Eritrea, and Japan would assure at least initial Western control of those areas.

NEUTRALS

13. Finland.

The Finnish people are stubbornly anti-Soviet, but Finland is in no position to defy the USSR. In the circumstances the Finnish Government, without repudiating the Soviet-Finnish treaty of mutual assistance, would seek to remain neutral, or at least to avoid Soviet occupation of Finnish territory. If Soviet forces entered Finland without express permission, the Finns would fight.

14. Sweden and Switzerland.

Both countries are ideologically anti-Soviet, but both cling to a traditional neutrality in hope of avoiding Soviet attack. If attacked, both would resist to their utmost ability.

15. Ireland.

The Irish Republic is strongly anti-Soviet in sentiment, but disposed to make the cession of Northern Ireland a precondition to any formal alliance with the Atlantic Powers.

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16. Spain.

The Franco regime is conspicuously anti-Soviet, but is ideologically unacceptable to Western Europe. In the event of war Spain might seize the opportunity to escape from isolation into defensive alliance with the Atlantic powers, but would probably remain non-belligerent unless attacked.

17. Yugoslavia.

The Tito regime is anathema to the USSR, which is actively seeking its overthrow by means short of war. At the same time, ideological considerations prevent its open alliance with the West. So far as concerns its own volition, these considerations would indicate a policy of neutrality in the event of war. If attacked, however, the Yugoslavs would offer a stubborn resistance.

18. Israel.

Israel's position is one of deliberate neutrality between the East and West. Western ties are actually predominant, however, and, if compelled to take sides, Israel would align itself with the West.

19. Syria and Lebanon.

These states are too weak to act with decision in international relations. They could be pressed into passive alignment with the West.

20. Afghanistan.

In dangerous proximity to the USSR and remote from succor, Afghanistan would remain neutral unless attacked.

21. Pakistan.

Pakistan would be indisposed to take any action deemed likely to provoke an otherwise avoidable Soviet attack. If threatened or attacked, however, Pakistan would resist and would expect Western support.

22. India.

At present it is a point of policy with India to retain a position of neutrality between East and West. Although there is some internal pressure for closer association with the West, India would probably remain initially neutral in the event of war. If threatened or attacked, however, India would resist and would expect Western support.

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23. Burma.

In its present anarchical condition, Burma would be incapable of taking effective part on either side. If the government could regain control, with Western aid, it would presumably honor passively its military commitments to Great Britain. If the Communists should gain the ascendancy, their position would be too precarious and exposed to permit them to provoke Western intervention with impunity.

24. Thailand.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Its passive alignment would be determined by the circumstances. In any case, it would be unlikely to become an active belligerent.

25. Indonesia.

Indonesian policy is likely to parallel that of India, for similar reasons rather than because of Indian influence.

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